



## Best Practice Document

In the interests of improving standards within Cemeteries and Church Yards in the UK, BRAMM have highlighted the following areas of Cemetery Management which have caused concern in the past for Burial Authorities and Memorial Masons. The following information is intended to highlight and either reference best practice or signpost where further information or training can be found.

### Burial Authorities:

#### **Memorial Safety Inspections:**

Burial Authorities have a general duty under the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 (LACO) to maintain the burial ground in good order. Parochial church councils are required to keep churchyards in good order if responsibility has not been transferred to the Local Authority.

Most burial ground operators will also have duties under Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (HSWA74). Operators should do all that is reasonably practicable to ensure that visitors and those working in burial grounds are not exposed to risks to their health and safety. The approach to managing memorial safety involves the periodic assessment of memorials as part of a planned exercise or when anything has changed, for example a programme of major work or repair to the burial ground environment.

The enforcing authorities under HSWA74 do not consider the risks from memorials to warrant inclusion in their proactive inspection regimes because of the low risk of injury. However, in the unlikely event of a serious accident, their inspectors may undertake an investigation. They will want assurance that operators had followed this guidance, had taken the sort of sensible, risk-based precautions set out, and that they had done all that is reasonably practicable in the circumstances.

Memorial stability and safety is a key area of concern for Burial Authorities. Guidelines set down by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) require all Burial Authorities to inspect every headstone in their cemeteries at least every 5 years. The inspection should be fully documented identifying all dangerous or unstable memorials.

Memorial safety in burial grounds is a highly sensitive issue, do nothing and an accident or death could occur. In such circumstances, it is possible for the person responsible for the management of the burial ground to be accused of criminal negligence.

When managing memorial safety in the burial ground it is essential that communication with the community is of the highest possible standard including the notification of all aspects of the inspection and making safe work.<sup>[1]</sup> If the proper notifications are not given to the public the manager could be found guilty of maladministration following an investigation by the ombudsman, or if there is an over

reliance on the laying flat of memorials as the method of making safe the manager could be severely criticised by the public and the press. Memorial Safety Inspections should always be completed by a suitably qualified Memorial Safety Team, this can be done by either employing outside contractors or training existing staff. For more information on approved training courses contact –

Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) Email:

[julied.iccm@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:julied.iccm@yahoo.co.uk) Telephone: 01952 230006 or

National Association of Memorial Masons (NAMM) Email:

[enquiries@namm.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@namm.org.uk) Telephone: 01788 542264

## Memorials:

### Ground Anchors:

All Ground Anchors fitted to BS8415–2018 should be accredited.

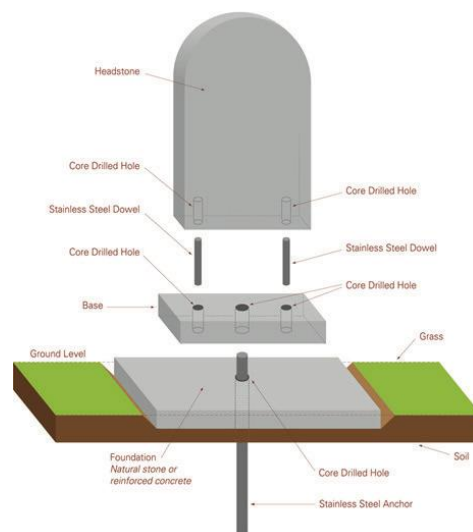
The National Association of Memorial Masons (NAMM) website includes a register of NAMM accredited Ground Anchors.

[www.namm.org.uk](http://www.namm.org.uk)

All Manufacturers and suppliers of Accredited Ground Anchors must provide technical support and guidance along with clear written fitting instructions regarding the appropriate usage of their Accredited products

### **All Accredited Ground Anchors must be fitted in accordance with manufacturer's instructions by qualified memorial fixers.**

*All fixing systems bars, tubes, dowels, pins, nuts, bolts & washers etc. must be of stainless steel of not less than Grade A302. All accredited fixing methods must be followed in accordance with instructions and fixings must not be modified.*



*It should be noted that there is no historical evidence of any injuries occurring from correctly installed Accredited ground anchors since their first introduction.*

Further information can be found in the BRAMM Blue Book.

[www.bramm.org](http://www.bramm.org)

### **Freedom of Choice – Memorial Regulations:**

Memorialisation throughout the centuries has met the natural human need as a focus for grief after the death of a loved one. Memorials should be designed and built around freedom of choice allowing the bereaved to make the right decision without contravening local authority or diocese regulations.

Memorials of all sizes and shapes are covered in BS8415 therefore Burial Authorities can safely consider permitting larger and more elaborate memorials to increase choice to the bereaved, knowing that they will be safe.

By allowing larger memorials, kerb sets (or smaller kerb sets on cremated remains sections) several cremation memorialisation options Burial Authorities can allow greater freedom of choice for the bereaved and also create more interesting burial grounds with a larger income stream.

*By ensuring that areas of ground are left undisturbed at the head of each grave to allow the headstone to be placed or by providing concrete beams Burial Authorities can help with the safe fixing of Memorials.*

**Note:** *It is recommended that burial authorities consider both lawn sections and traditional sections within new burial ground designs and/or consider allowing memorials up to 1.5m in height. This approach will encourage a wider range of memorialisation. Maintenance costs in traditional sections must be considered, so charges for burial in each section should reflect this. By providing a better range of choice, problems with unauthorised memorials will be reduced along with many of the long-term management problems. More importantly, this will allow the bereaved to express themselves through the memorial design rather than by the addition of a range of inferior quality unauthorised memorabilia. This improves the service to all burial ground users.*

### **Memorial Registration Schemes:**

In July 2000, a child died as a result of an incident in a Cemetery involving a memorial, and the Health and Safety of memorials became a major issue for Burial Authorities.<sup>[1]</sup> It was clear that some sort of regulation was required and the British Standard - BS8415 was first introduced in 2005.<sup>[2]</sup> The standard includes such requirements as: –

- Procedure for the testing of existing memorials <sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>
- How to deal with those found to be at risk. <sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>
- How memorials and their fixing components should be tested – with minimum specifications for materials. <sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>
- Use of tested and approved Ground Anchors <sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>
- Use of appropriately sized stainless-steel dowels <sup>[1]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>

The British Standard is ever evolving and it was reviewed and updated in 2008 and again in 2010 and more recently a further review took place looking at the various types of soil conditions found in cemeteries and the impact on the types of ground anchor that are used. *It is worth noting that since the introduction of BS8415 in 2005 and since the use of approved fixing systems has become compulsory, no serious accidents have been reported on memorials fixed to British Standard requirements.* Burial Authorities take responsibility for H&S within their burial grounds, including closed Church of England churchyards to whom maintenance responsibility has passed, and have a 'duty of care' to the general public and those working in their sites. It is up to each individual authority to ensure that all masons and fixers working in their burial grounds are properly trained, insured and are following current industry standards. To help Burial Authorities achieve this the British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons (BRAMM) was set up and later the National Association of Memorial masons (NAMM) set up the Register of Qualified Memorial Fixers (RQMF). They are both **FREE** for Burial Authorities to use and provide a register of approved masons who are all appropriately trained to fix memorials to current BS8415 standards, they also have correct insurance as well as current Risk Assessment and Health and Safety Policies. Both registration schemes are exclusively designed to help Burial Authorities meet their Health and Safety duties, improve standards and create safer Burial Grounds. To help Burial Authorities and Masons to clearly understand their respective responsibilities under BS8415, BRAMM produces the 'Blue Book' and RQMF produces the 'Code of Working Practice'. (Both documents are regularly updated to reflect any changes to the BS 8415 document)

#### Benefits of using a BRAMM or RQMF National Registration Scheme:

- Will save on clerical time, time saved can therefore be redirected to other vital tasks. Money saved can be shown as a real benefit for council tax payers. Using a Registration scheme also provides assurance to councillors that best practice is followed. Improved safety and methods of working are often tangible and recognised by all.
- Provides suitable nationally recognised trained businesses and masons/fixers.
- All information about mason's qualifications and the eligibility of masons to install memorials is available online. Fixer Licences, insurance details and risk assessments can also be checked online.
- Local authorities can avoid mistakes which have already been addressed by other BRAMM/RQMF associated authorities in other areas of the country.
- BRAMM/RQMF have Representation on the BS committee which ensures current industry standards – therefore Burial Authorities will get up to date and current information on any changes in legislation affecting the fixing of memorials.
- The Blue Book and Code of Working Practice are both compliant to the current BS8415.
- Registers are effectively policed, ensuring that acceptable standards of fixing are maintained – with a robust discipline procedures for memorial businesses/fixers.

- Technical queries telephone helpline. [SEP]
- The schemes also assist the bereaved to select a competent mason for the installation of a memorial thus avoiding unnecessary problems of poor workmanship.

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Both Schemes are **FREE** to join for Burial Authorities. [SEP] The BRAMM scheme is fully supported by the following leading industry organisations –

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- ✓ Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) [SEP]
- ✓ Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities (FBCA)
- ✓ Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC)
- ✓ Commonwealth War Graves Committee
- ✓ Church of England

For further details on the **BRAMM Registration Scheme** or to register please contact Head Office on –

Email: [bramm@bramm-uk.org](mailto:bramm@bramm-uk.org) Telephone: 01788 544 963

For further details on the **RQMF Registration Scheme** or to register please contact Head Office on –

Email: [enquiries@namm.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@namm.org.uk) Telephone: 01788 542264

## **Cleaning of memorials in cemeteries:**

This note has been produced by BRAMM to assist burial authorities and companies in managing how memorials are cleaned in their cemeteries.

### To clean or not to clean

Burial authorities are advised to provide guidance to grave owners/members of the public regarding how best to clean a memorial. A starting point should be whether the memorial actually needs cleaning or not. This is because every time that a memorial is cleaned, there is a risk that it could be damaged, for example the gilding of the lettering may be scratched, or the surface of the stone could be abraded. Some stone types become darker with age and exposure to the elements. This is a natural process, and trying to reverse it through harsh cleaning could cause damage to the surface of the stone.

If cleaning is required, gentle is best. Plenty of water and soft cloths, or wooden or plastic scrapers for some types of stone are the preferred tools to use. Harsh chemicals should be avoided, as should wire brushes or other abrasives, as these can cause damage to the memorial and surrounding area. High pressure jet washing should be very carefully considered, as it may not be the most appropriate method of cleaning a headstone, especially older ones that may have cracks in them or where the face of the stone is delaminating. High pressure washing can also erode joints, which then permits the ingress of water and could result in the failure of joints via freeze/thaw action, making the memorial unstable. Substantial damage could be caused to a memorial and surrounding area by using this cleaning technique.

### Preparation

Burial authorities and companies should advise grave owners/members of the public to be cautious before undertaking any memorial cleaning themselves. The memorial should be tested for stability before any work is carried out. The burial authority or company could offer to do this testing (and may wish to charge a fee to cover their costs) or the grave owner/member of the public could appoint their own suitably experienced or qualified contractor, for example a memorial mason.

## Guidance

Guidance on the best way to clean memorials can be found at:

[Cleaning Gravestones- How should it be done? | Stoneletters](#)

[How to Properly Clean a Headstone in 8 Steps | Cake Blog \(joincake.com\)](#)

[How to Clean a Gravestone: 12 Steps \(with Pictures\) - wikiHow](#)

The National Association of Memorial Masons (NAMM) Code of Working Practice contains a section on cleaning memorials (Section 17). This advice is aimed at memorial masons rather than members of the public. Burial authorities and companies need to consider whether the use of chemicals to clean memorials as outlined in this section would be permitted in their burial grounds, as this may be contrary to broader environmental management aims.

## Permission and permits

Ideally any substantial cleaning of a memorial (ie anything other than a simple wipe over) should only be carried out with the permission of the grave owner. The owner of a grave, or family member or friend nominated by them, can carry out cleaning themselves, but they are advised to follow relevant guidance to ensure this is done safely and without causing further damage to the memorial. If the memorial is under a guarantee period from the memorial mason who installed it, the owner should check with them that their cleaning methodology will not affect the guarantee.

If the grave owner wishes to use a company to clean the memorial for them, the burial authority should insist that a memorial permit application form is completed, showing the consent of the grave owner and the details of who is to undertake the work and how. If the grave owner is deceased, the burial authority/company may require a transfer of ownership to take place before it can allow any work to take place on the memorial.

Before issuing a memorial permit for the cleaning to go ahead, the burial authority should ensure that the company undertaking the work has adequate public liability insurance (advice on the amount required should be sought from the authority/company insurers). The company undertaking the work should also be asked for their safe working practice and methodology used for cleaning the memorial, and a relevant risk assessment. If chemicals are to be used in the cleaning process, the burial authority or company should ask for a data sheet and risk assessment for the chemicals. If the company is registered with BRAMM or is on the NAMM Register of Qualified Memorial Fixers (RQMF) you can check their insurance details on the relevant register website. You should, however, still ask for their cleaning methodology and a risk assessment.

The burial authority/company should check that the proposed methodology fits with their own regulations for the management of the cemetery, especially the use of chemicals or potentially damaging mechanical methods of cleaning. They should also check that the permission of the grave owner has been given. If the burial authority/company is satisfied that all is in order, they may issue the permit to the company undertaking the work. The burial authority can decide if they wish to make a charge for issuing such a permit.

## Substantial renovation

Work that involves anything other than cleaning, eg refixing part or all of the memorial, must only be undertaken by suitably qualified memorial masons and in line with the current British Standard 8415.

## Members of the Public:

### Best Practice Advice when Buying or Selling a Memorial:

BRAMM can only advise on compliance to the current British Standard 8415 which covers the safe fixing of Memorials.

We occasionally receive concerns from customers who are not happy with the Memorial they have purchased for aesthetic reasons that are not covered by BS 8415.

To avoid any misunderstanding about the finished Memorial we strongly advise both Customers and Memorial Masons to adopt the following procedure.

1. Customer should discuss their requirements with a BRAMM registered Mason who should advise on the following –  
Local Cemetery rules and regulations in particular what size and design of Memorial will be accepted in the local Cemeteries.
2. Discuss Customers requirements and advise on the Memorial Design, Stone, Inscription, Cost and Timescales involved.
3. When the Customer is happy with information given the Memorial Mason should provide a draft drawing of the proposed Memorial Design including any inscriptions to be used.
4. The Customer should then check the drawing and inscription carefully and clarify any questions they may have with the Memorial Mason. If necessary the drawing should be updated to reflect any changes.
5. Once both parties are happy with the Memorial design and inscriptions both the Customer and Memorial Mason should sign the drawing confirming the design.
6. When the Memorial has been made and before it is erected in the Cemetery the Customer should view the finished product and confirm the Memorial is acceptable by signing a declaration.  
Once this final process is complete, the memorial can then be erected.

The above simple procedure will protect both the Customer and the Mason from any misunderstanding regarding the design of the Memorial.